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DISCOURSE

ON AN

Extraordinary Occasion:

FROM

MATTHEW VI. xxxiii.

By ROBERT BRAGGE.

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*To the LECTURE, at whose Desire
this DISCOURSE was Preached,
and is now Published.*

Gentlemen,

GOD hath cast your Lot in the last, and so the worst of Times: To shine like Lights, or look towards Heaven in so dark a Day, is very extraordinary. Among many Sins, the present Age abounds with, that of turning the back on the Person and Gospel of Christ, is one of the chief: It's this threatens, to open the Windows of Heavens Vengeance, as it hath already the Floodgates of Hells Impieties. Do we look for Storms in Autumn, and Frosts in Winter? and shall we not expect Judgments? Where the Gospel hath been Preach'd but not receiv'd; some of the present Generation, seem to be going a step beyond Antichrist, to Rome Pagan. It's not this, or the other Gospel Truth is now struck at, but Christianity it self. Mahomet's Followers, may in Point of Steadiness shame such; as the Worshippers of Idols, once did the Israelites. Should Christ ask of you as he did of his Disciples, Will you also leave me? I conclude, you would return their answer. Lord, to whom should we go? thou hast the Words of Eternal Life. All the Fire and Malice of Hell, can never burn Heaven's Record; that God hath given us Eternal Life (which doubtless includes all the Blessings he designs the Elect) and that Life is in his Son; entail'd on his Person, he being the Purchaser, and so the Lord of Heaven's Mannour. He that hath the Son hath Life, to seek it any where else, as it imports either the good Things of Grace, or the greater Things of Glory, is to look the Living among the Dead, To hope to be pardon'd, justified, reconciled, adopted, sanctified, made fruitful, kept, or glorified out of Christ; is to encompass our selves with Sparks of

The EPISTLE, &c.

our own Kindling : But as the Sun, so Christ is to be seen, only by his own Light.

I am, Gentlemen, thus free, because I know I write to those, who are not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, nor backward to support it : It's therein as in a Glass, we behold his Glory, and read his Love; whereby we are transform'd into his Likeness. One deform'd, may, for Years together, look on other Pictures, though never so beautiful, and go away as ugly as he came; but it's not thus with the Representation of Christ in the Gospel; by it We are changed into the same Image, from Glory to Glory. May you daily experience such a Change. Maybe, who hid the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge in the Field of the Gospel, and knows where they lie, lead you into all Truth, as it is in Jesus; is, and shall be the daily Prayer of one, who wishes the best of Blessings, may be shew'd down upon your Heads and Hearts, and is according to many Obligations.

Yours to serve you in the Gospel

ROBERT BRAGGE

ERRATA

Page 5. line 15, dele l. p. 10. l. 27, for *Faith*, read, *saith*. p. 11. l. 23, after together a full point. p. 13. l. 9, f. *Ray*, r. *slay*. p. 17. l. 14, after righteousness a full point. p. 20. l. 9, f. *so*, r. *Lo*. l. 17. f. *Economy*. p. 27. l. 8, f. *nobler*, r. *noble*. p. 28. l. 9, after continued, r. *in*

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The Words are part of the first Sermon Preach'd by Christ, after his Entry on his Publick Office, whose Lips dropt as the Hony-comb, Grace was poured into them, and Grace was poured out by them. vers. 25. he warns against carking Cares, that prickly Yoke we are so apt to wreath, and bind about our own Hearts: The Exhortation is pressed with great variety of cogent Arguments, which being dispatched, he in the Words I have read to you, turns their Thoughts to heavenly Objects, and their Desires into an heavenly Channel. *But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, and all these Things shall be added unto you.* Where we have.

1. The Object proposed, no less than a Kingdom, the Glory whereof not only fills but makes Heaven.
2. Our Duty, or how we are to carry it towards this Kingdom, which is to seek it. Are Earthly Kingdoms, the Pillars of which are Glass, their Foundation Sand, and themselves a Bubble, worth seeking, and is not this much more? The Pillars whereof are everlasting Purposes, it's Foundation laid in an everlasting Covenant, and it's self an exceeding weight of Glory.
3. How we are to seek it. In the first place. It's too good to be wholly neglected, and too great to be minded by the By.
4. The way in which it's to be sought; a way of Righteousness: Other Kingdoms are often sought and obtain'd by base Unrighteous Practices. The Devil may be said to have an hand in setting the Crown on some Heads; but here the Crown and King-

Kingdom are in all respects a Crown and Kingdom of Righteousness.

5. The Encouragement, *All these Things shall be added unto you*; thrown in as Paper and Pack-thread. Thus Godliness is profitable for all Things, having the Promise of this World, &c.

From the Words we may observe, Interest, as well as Duty, commands us, to make the seeking the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, as the great, to the first Work or Business of our Lives. In speaking to which Doctrine, we shall by way of Explication answer a threefold Inquiry.

1. What are we to understand by this Kingdom?
2. What by the Righteousness of God?
3. How it's to be sought? and so come by way of Proof to satisfy young ones, It's their Interest, as well as Duty thus to seek it. Which with the Application shall conclude this Exercise.

As for the *First*, By the Kingdom of God, we are to understand, not his Kingdom of Nature, founded by him as the God of Nature; This we are naturally the Subjects of, and need not to be born again, to enter; but his Kingdom of Grace, founded by him as the God and Father of Christ, to which we are by Nature both Strangers and Enemies, and must be created over again in Christ Jesus or cannot enter. A Kingdom, wherein the Divine Attributes, are not only employed in bringing about, but glorified in our Salvation. In this Kingdom Grace is chosen (as it were)

were) to reign, by the common consent of the other Divine Perfections, *Rom. 5. 21.* and Christ, as God Man, by the joynt consent of the other two Divine Persons, *Psal. 2. 6.* it's a Kingdom therefore, in which Grace reigns through Christ.

1. In opening the Eyes of the blind, Man was created the Eye of the lower World, the only Creature that could see for God; his Mind therefore called the Candle of the Lord; but by Sin, was *Prov. 20. 27.* soon blown out into a stinking Snuff. He is now blind to Duty, and blind to Danger, runs upon the neck of the Almighty, even the thick Bosses of his Bucklers. *Job 15. 26.* Puts Darknes for Light; Calls a Night of Sin and Unbelief Day; and Light for Darknes. Is blind to the Glory of God, as it shines forth in the Face of Jesus Christ; and blind to the Glory of Christ, as it shines forth in the Glass of the Gospel. But in that Day, saith the Holy Ghost, *Isa. 29. 18.* speaking of the Gospel-Dispensation of this Kingdom; *Shall the Eyes of the Blind see out of Obscurity, and out of Darknes. I will bring (saith God, whose Kingdom this is) the Blind by a Way they know not, I will lead them in Paths they have not known; I will make Darknes Light before them. Isa. 42. 16.* who blinder than the Gentile World? on whose Eyes, the Scales of Ignorance had been growing for many Ages; and yet made Light in the Lord, *Eph. 1. 8.*

Secondly, In Opening the Ears of the Deaf, We are naturally uncircumcised, as in Heart, so in Ears; Deaf to the Thunders of the Law, and deaf to the Sweet

Sweet Voice of the Gospel: The Terrors of the Lord from Mount *Sinai*, they do not affright us, nor his Love reveal'd on Mount *Zion*, draw us; Like the Deaf Adder, we refuse to be driven by the one, or drawn by the other; but Grace hath a Key to open the Heart, much more the Ear. *In that Day, shall the Deaf hear the Words of the Book.* Isa. 29. 18. What Book? Undoubtedly that Book of Books, the Gospel. Again, Chap. 25. v. 5. *Then, the Ears of the Deaf shall be unstopped.* To what? Why, the Voice of Christ, by whom God speaks to us, in and by the Gospel. The Devil, upon the Coming of this Kingdom, loofeth, as the Sinner's Eye, so his Ear; is no longer able to hoodwink the one, or stop the other.

Thirdly, In making the Dumb to speak: As Man was created the Eye, so the Tongue of this lower World: The first Words *Adam* spake, were it's probable, Words of Praise; but Sin soon struck him dumb: Dumb to Prayer, and dumb to Praise; Dumb to a Speaking well of God, and Wishing well unto Him; more especially as the God and Father of Christ. We naturally speak the Language of *Ashdod*, not of *Canaan*; our Mouths are full of Cursing, instead of Blessing; Bitterness instead of Praise. But by the Coming of this Kingdom, The Tongue of the Stammerer is enabled to speak plainly; Isa. 32. 4. And the Tongue of the Dumb to sing: Isa. 35. 6. Sing the Song of *Moses*, and the Lamb in the Ways of *Zion*; and therein harmonize with those who are about the Throne.

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Fourthly,

Fourthly, In making the Lame to walk: As we are naturally unable to give a serious Look, so to take one right Step towards Heaven. The Scales of Unbelief, they blind the Mind; and the Shackles of Sin they bind the Will. We want, both a Will to resolve for God, and a Power to execute any such Resolutions; so great Strangers are we, to the Way of Truth, and so accusom'd to those of Death, that Wisdom's Paths, tho' Paths of Pleasantness, as well as Peace, are stept over, and avoided by us. We wander from God, instead of walking with him. But what saith God, whose Kingdom this is? *Isa. 49. 11. I will make all my Mountains a Way, and my High-ways shall be exalted. These shall come from far, &c.* And so *Isa. 35. 6. Then shall the lame Man leap as an Hart.* A Creature remarkable for its Nimbleness.

Fifthly, In raising the Dead: Not in Nature only, but which is the worst of Deaths, in Sins. Our Minds, they are naturally Dead to the Knowledge of God, our Wills to his Service, our Hearts to his Love, our Consciences to his Authority, and our whole Man to all Communion and Fellowship with him. We say unto God depart from us, both as the God of Nature, Grace, and Glory. A Soul dead in Sins is only fit Fuel for Everlasting Burnings. But what saith the Prince of Life? *John 5. 25. The Hour is coming, and now is, when the Dead shall hear the Voite of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.* To raise a dead Body out of Rottenness, is as great a Wonder of Power, as the Forming Adam out of the Dust; but to quicken a dead Soul,

Soul, is certainly a greater; for the nobler the Being, the greater the Death, and consequently the Restoration. Would it not be more difficult to light the Sun, if extinguish'd, than a Candle? The first *Adam* was made but a living Soul, he was to convey Life to his Posterity, but could not restore to Life, either himself or his: but the *Second Adam* is made a quickning Spirit, restores Life to Soul, as well as Body, 1 Cor. 15. 45.

Sixthly, It's a Kingdom, wherein Grace reigns in pardoning the most guilty. We are alike Criminals by Nature, equally charged with the guilt of the first *Adam's* first Transgression; and therefore from the very Cradle owe Ten thousand Talents, but by actual Transgressions are daily adding to that Sum. A Mountain of Guilt, lies at every Sinners Door, too big for all the Angels in Heaven to remove, but not for the Grace of this Kingdom: Come now saith God (though the Party offended) *Let us reason together, though your Sins be as Scarlet, they shall be as white as Snow; though red like Crimson, they shall be as Wooll,* Isa. 1. 18. the aboundings of Sin, and the aboundings of Guilt, go together in Nature, Things which are exceeding large, are but few, and Things exceeding many, small: But our Sins are large as the Mountains, and many as the Sand, but not too many for Grace to pardon; Behold I have blotted out as a thick Cloud thy Transgressions, and as a Cloud thy Sins, Isa. 44. 22.

Seventhly, In justifying the most ungodly: The Law, as a Covenant of Works, is seemingly an hard, but a most righteous Task-master, it leaves no room

for an after Trial, admits of no Repentance, gives no Strength; will abate nothing, and takes no manner of notice of the Sinners best Endeavours, but curseth to the Pit of Hell, all that continue not in all Things, written in that Holy Book, to do them, *Gal. 3. 10.* but to him that worketh not, saith Grace, but believeth on him that justifies the ungodly, his Faith is counted for Righteousness, *Rom. 4. 5.* his Faith, not subjectively, but objectively considered; a like Expression with that, *Matth. 9. 22.* *Thy Faith hath made thee whole*; which Words cut the very Sinews of *Pelagian, Popish and Arminian* Justification; for do they not expressly bar and strip the Sinner of all inherent Personal Righteousness? Now as God's justified Ones are consider'd, not as Workers of Righteousness, but as Ungodly, when Christ's Righteousness is by an Hand of Grace put upon them; So the greatness of their past Ungodliness, no more than of their present Unworthiness, can stop that bountiful Hand. Who more ungodly than the *Corinthians*? The Holy Ghost gives as black a Catalogue of their Sins as of any, *1 Cor. 6. 10.* and yet justified, as well as sanctified. Grace sets us at Work from, but not for a justifying Righteousness, but enableth, by an Hand of Faith, to receive a glorious One, ready wrought out to our Hand, a Robe long and broad enough, to justify the most ungodly; a Covering, which though it saves the Soul, destroys our Sins, Pride and Unbelief, they flourish most, where a Design to establish a justifying Righteousness of our own, is carrying on: But no Sin can thrive under the Shadow of Christ's imputed Righteousness. Like the Herb

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Affizoe, of which the *Ethiopians* boast, a Plant of that rare Virtue, against the biting of Asps, &c. that the most hurtful Serpents touch'd with it, lye for dead. Let the worst of Sinners, but touch the Hem of this Garment, they lose their Venom, it kills their Sins

Eighthly, In Reconciling the most Inveterate: The Sword of God's Vindictive Justice may punish, but it's the Scepter of his Grace alone, can stay the Enmity of a Sinner's Heart. *You that were sometime alienated, and Enemies in your Mind by wicked Works, hath he reconciled.* Col. 1. 21. How consider'd? As the Father of Christ, and in him the God of all Grace; as is manifest by the Coherence. The Grace of the Father, that provides, and accepts the Attonement; and the Grace of the Spirit, that reveals, and applies the Attonement. By which Grace, that it may be the more glorified, the worst of Enemies are oft times made the best of Friends: Who a greater Enemy to the Worship of God, under the Old Testament, than a *Manasseh*? and yet reconciled: Who a greater Enemy to the Gospel under the new, than a *Saul*? yet reconciled.

Ninthly, In adopting the greatest Aliens: Christ's Parable of the Prodigal, belongs to *Adam*, as well as his Posterity. He quickly turn'd the back, in wandering from God; and spent, by one riotous Act, the vast Patrimony he was intrusted with. Now what he was by Choice, we are by Nature; Straglers from the very Womb. We feed on Ashes, before we can feed our selves. Now as we are born, so we live, and as we live, so unless prevented by rich Grace

Grace, we die, making Lies our Refuge, hiding our selves from God, under Falshood. Who greater Strangers than the *Ephesians*? You have their Character, *Eph. 2. 12. Aliens from the Common-wealth of Israel, Strangers from the Covenants of Promise, having no hope, and without God in this World, and yet adopted, vers. 19. Ye are no more Strangers and Foreigners, but Fellow-citizens with the Saints, and of the Household of God. To make Heirs of Hell, Heirs of God; Co-heirs with the Devil, Co-heirs with Christ; is Grace in the Aboundings thereof.*

Tenthly, In Cleansing the most Filthy: No Fire on Earth can purifie the Sinner, he comes but the worse, out of the Fire of Affliction; *Isa. 1. 5.* and would do so (if tried) out of the Fire of Hell. The Fire of Sin is unquenchable, as well as that of Punishment, to any Thing, but the Blood of Christ. Who more filthy than the Men of *Judah*, and the Inhabitants of *Jerusalem*? *Zec. 13. 1.* and yet to them is it a Fountain open'd. No Stain so deep, but the Blood of Christ, as it's the Blood of God, and of the Everlasting Covenant, can fetch it out. It washes the *Æthiopian* White, and turns the Leopard into a Lamb.

Lastly, It's a Kingdom, in which Grace reigns, through Christ, in giving him as God's Salvation unto the very chief of Sinners; which is the Substance of what hitherto hath been deliver'd: We are alike Sinners by Nature, but not by Practice; some make more Haste than others, to fill up the Measure of their Sins; young Men, it may be, but old Sinners. The Devil has his early ripe Fruit,

as well as Christ : As some are betimes fit for Heaven, so others are as early fully ripe for Hell. Their Damnation slumbers not, because in working of it out they are so watchful ; take more Pains to damn themselves, than others do to be saved : *Draw Iniquity with the Cords of Vanity, and sin as it were with a Cart-Rope* ; as if impatient to be in Hell. Now Grace delights to make the Chief of Saints of the Chief of Sinners, as in the Instance of *Paul* ; and multiplies to pardon those it saves : They love most, to whom most is forgiven ; and often obey best, who have been most disobedient. Persons, who have done most against God before Conversion ; are often with *Paul*, enabled to do most for God after Conversion. The Aboundings of Sin, can no more hinder the Aboundings of Grace, than a Ridge of Rocks stop the Flowing of the Sea. It superabounds where Sin hath abounded, and sways its Scepter of Life and Salvation, where *Sin hath reigned unto Death*, Rom. 5. 20, 21. *All Manner of Sin and Blasphemy*, saith Christ, *shall be forgiven unto Men*, Mat. 12. 31. *save one*. Thousands and Ten Thousands included, and but one excepted. Could an Exact History of all the Sins, ever acted by the Children of Men be compos'd, it would fall vastly short of being a Compleat Commentary on the Heart of one of those, whom Christ saves. Man is not so great a Sinner, but Christ is as great a Saviour : Should any of the Elect be suffer'd to live, and wallow in Sin to the Age of a *Methuselah*, and then be enabled to look unto Christ ; he who is *Zion's Balm*,
as...

as well as Physician, would certainly heal him. The Treasures of his Blood, like those of his Person, are inexhaustible. Thus much for the *First Inquiry*.

The *Second* is, What we are to understand by the *Righteousness of God*? This Kingdom is not erected on the Ruins of the Law, either Ceremonial or Moral; the One hath its Accomplishment in it, the Other, being a Copy of that Holiness, which is the Shine of each Person and Attribute in the God-head, can never pass away, but is established by it, both as a Covenant of Works, and Rule of Life, whereby our Thank Offerings are to be regulated. The Moral Law as a Covenant of Works, was gloriously established, by being fulfilled by Christ, as God's Covenant and our Surety. As a Rule of Life it was magnified, by having been written on the Heart, and expressed in the Walk of Christ, as a Pattern for his to copy after; who, by having it put by Christ's Spirit, into their Hearts, are enabled to write after it, or tread in his Steps: Neither is it a Kingdom, wherein the Divine Attributes are at variance, or in any danger, to eclipse one the other: In it, *Mercy and Truth are met together; Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other*, Psal. 85. 10. as the most distant Natures, the Divine and Human; and the most distant Persons, God and the Sinners; so the most distant Attributes, Holiness and Grace, Justice and Mercy, are in it brought together, and so displayed, as to glorify each other.

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By the Righteousness of God therefore, we are undoubtedly to understand, that by which all this is accomplished. Which upon due inquiry, will be found to be Christ's imputed, and not our inherent Personal Righteousness. It's Christ's, and not ours, which the Father calls his, in the Old Testament, *Isa. 51. 5. My Righteousness is near, My Salvation is gone forth*: Which latter Expression explains the former to be meant of Christ's imputed Righteousness; which when wrought out, was the Purchase, and when imputed, gives Possession of Life and Salvation. So again, *vers. 6. My Salvation shall be for ever, and my Righteousness shall not be abolished. Where Salvation is linked with this Righteousness, thus it's Christ's, and not ours*, which is called the Righteousness of God in the New, *Rom. 3. 21, 22. The Righteousness of God without the Law is manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets*: which must be understood of Christ's imputed Righteousness, that being the Righteousness, *Moses and the Prophets bare Testimony unto, by believing in it (as also did their Father Abraham)* and writing of it. Christ we are told, *Rom. 10. 4. Is the end of the Law for Righteousness*: No wonder then, the Law should witness for him, as having been fulfilled only by him; but the following Words place it in the clearest Light, *vers. 22. Even the Righteousness of God, which is by Faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all that believe*, So *Rom. 10. 3. a not submitting unto this Righteousness, is called a Non-submission to the Righteousness of God. They being ignorant of God's Righteousness, that is, his Essential Righteousness, and going about to establish*
C *their*

their own Righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the Righteousness of God, which must be Christ's imputed Righteousness; for so it follows, vers. 5. Christ is, &c. In a Word, in this Righteousness of Christs, we are said (to whom it is imputed) to be made the Righteousness of God, 2 Cor. 5. 21. an Expression too big, to be spoke of Adam's in a State of Innocency; or of the Angels, who kept their first Station; it suits Christ's only, who is over all, God blessed for ever more. As the Glow-worm shines only in the Night, so our own Righteousness only in the Dark, which Righteousness of Christ is called God's..

First, Because a Righteousness of his providing, in making which Provision, the Treasures of his Wisdom, Love, and Grace, are in their unmeasureable Heighths, and fathomless Depths broken up: had a Council of all the Angels in Heaven been called, had their Understandings been enlarged to the uttermost, and had they sat in Council for a Thousand Ages, they could never have found out such a Door of Hope for lost Sinners, as this Righteousness is: For it's part of the Mystery hid in God, of which we read, Eph. 3. 9. and of that manifold Wisdom, which is made known to the Angels, only by the Church, Eph. 3. 10. they know more of the Law and Works of God than Adam did, yet pry into the Gospel, 1. Pet. 1. 12..

Secondly, Because a Righteousness of his accepting, how far this was refusable by God, absolutely considered

sidered, without respect to any Covenant Transactions with Christ, the Bringer in thereof. Also, whether-refusable by God, relatively considered, as the Father of such a Son as Christ? are Questions: Faith is not curious to be resolved in, but rather looks on them as things too high, Certain it is, of its being accepted by God, the Judge of all, as the purchasing Cause of all the Blessings, designed the Elect. Christ as a Sacrifice for Sin, was to God an Offering of a *sweet smelling Savour*, Eph. 5. 2. By which Offering, *he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified*, Heb. 10. 14. his being once and again witnessed unto, by an audible Voice from Heaven; all the Miracles he wrought in the Father's Name; his being heard, as to what he feared; the Angel strengthening him in the Garden; his not being suffered to see Corruption, but raised by the Power, and set at the right hand of the Father in the Heavens, are Proofs sufficient of his Being (as the Fulfiller of all Righteousness) accepted.

Thirdly, It's a Righteousness of his revealing: Not a Word of this Righteousness to be found, in that vast Volume, the Book of Nature; no, not in the first; which was by far the better Edition of it. But what there may be, when Christ shall put out his new Edition, by making all things new, is impossible to determine. It's disputable, whether the Heaven of Heavens, before that Palace was new hung, for the Reception of Christ as God-Man; had any Footsteps of this Righteousness stamp'd upon it, it being one of those deep things of God, lockt up from An-

gels and Men, in the Cabinet of his own breast; which none, but he, who searcheth the deep things of God, can reveal; by whom it was made known to Old Testament Saints, *Isa.* 44. 25, 26. *Rom.* 16. 25, 26. as well as New. Christ himself, as God's Servant, is the Preacher, as well as Bringer in of this Righteousness, *Psal.* 40. 9. *I have Preached Righteousness in the great Congregation*, made up of Old Testament Saints, as well as New: *So I have not refrained my Lips, O Lord, thou knowest*, which he calls his Righteousness, *vers.* 10. *I have not hid thy Righteousness within my Heart.* A Copy for all Ministers to write after.

Fourthly, Because a Righteousness of the Fathers imputing, as each Person in the God-head, is deeply concern'd, so each bear a distinct Character and Place, in the Economy of our Salvation. The Father, as he is the first Person, so the first Place; and consequently that of the Party offended, and yet (which will be for ever, for the Glory of his Grace) the Contriver of the whole. The Son, as the second Person, so the second Place, and therefore sent or commissioned by the Father, to finish Transgression, and make an end of Sin, and bring in this Everlasting Righteousness. The Spirit, as the third Person, so the third Place, and so sent, both by the Father, and Son, to apply, or put the Son's Purchase into our Possession. Now as it's the Spirit, who must enable us to put off the Rag of our own, and to put on this Robe of Righteousness; so it's the Father, who must impute or place it to our Account: He who plac'd our Sins to Christ, must place his Righteousness to ours. The same

same Person who made him Sin for us, must make us the Righteousness of God in him. Thus much for the second Inquiry.

The third and last is, *How are we to seek this Kingdom?* which must not only come nigh unto, but be brought into us. *The Kingdom of God*, saith Christ, *is within you*, Luk. 17. 21. or we cannot be said to enter into it. Look, as the Heart is the chief Seat of Satan's Kingdom, before Conversion; so it's the chief Seat, of God's after Conversion. He that commands the Heart, be it God, or the Devil, commands the whole Man. To seek this Kingdom, therefore is,

First, With the Heart, to put in for a share, in the Immunities, Priviledges and Blessings thereof; which being given, in, and through Christ's Righteousness, as their purchasing, procuring Cause, and entailed on his Person; therefore, to seek this Kingdom, is,

Secondly, With the Heart, in a way of Believing, to lay hold of, and grow up into Christ, as the Lord our Righteousness; but because *Faith*, though the Gift of God *comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God*, Rom. 10. 17. Therefore:

Thirdly, A seeking of Faith, in the Truth and Growth of it, at the Hand of God, in a diligent Attendance on those Ordinances, and Use of such Means as he hath appointed, for the Giving and Increase of it; may be called a seeking this Kingdom. The Gospel, though it excludes Merit, and consequent-

quently all Entiteling Conditions, whiereby the Creature may make it self to differ, have wherein to trust, or whereof to glory. It neither excludes Order, nor the Use of Means. The Letter of the Gospel calls for them; though the Spirit of the Gospel can Work without them. The Gospel in the Letter of it, is suited to us as Rational Creatures, in the Spirit of it, as lost helpless Sinners. Now thus, We are to seek this Kingdom, and the Righteousness thereof, in the first place; which may be understood, as spoke of the Heart, Lip, or Life. If of the Heart, Christ here expects, that he, and his Kingdom should be uppermost, in our Thoughts, Esteem, Desires, Aims, Purposes, &c. Can the Heart, that busie Part of Man, be better than thus employed? Whilst the Seat of Satan's Kingdom, it's a lively Picture of Hell; but upon its seeking this Kingdom, it becomes as lively a Picture of Heaven; but if we understand it of the Lip, Christ expects this Kingdom should be uppermost in our Prayers; that whenever we bow the Knee, before his God and Father, it should be for the Coming of this Kingdom in greater Spirituality, Power and Glory. Thus the first Petition, in the Lord's Pattern, is for the Coming of this Kingdom: but if we understand it of the Life, Christ hereby forbids the Scraps only of Time and Strength, requiring the chief, and in a Sence the whole, to be employed in the Search. It deserves the first of our Life, the first of every Week, and the first of every Day; a sure way to bring down a Blessing on our Basket and Store, throughout the whole of the Day, our Weeks and Lives; which brings me by way of Proof, to satisfie
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young Ones ; it's their Interest, as well as Duty thus to seek it. That it's our Duty, needs no Proof, the Text speaks it ; that it's our Interest, will appear by considering.

First, Hereby the Cockatrice is crushed in the Egg, and the fiery flying Serpent before it's hatched. Sin is nipt in the bud, and the old Man turn'd out of doors, before he hath fortified, and thereby further secured himself. Is it not a mighty Advantage to invest a Strong Hold, before it's either finished, or stored ? whilst unprovided, to make a vigorous defence, to have Sin's Strong Holds levelled betimes, and our Hearts rid of such Vermin, as our Lusts ; must be every ones Interest.

Secondly, Hereby the Devil is baffled, and all his Hopes blasted. He undoubtedly, no sooner hears of our Birth, but conceives great hopes concerning us, and forms many a Design how to secure, as well as employ us in his dark Kingdom ; but by an early seeking of this Kingdom, we unravel all, bring a damp on that proud Spirit ; his Designs against our Souls prove abortive, and he himself grows chagrin.

Thirdly, It's our Interest thus to seek it, because of the vast Possessions entail'd by Heavens Grant, upon such as find it. We have a double Inventory of their Possessions.

The one in the Old Testament, *Psal. 84. 11. The Lord God is a Sun and Shield : The Lord will give Grace and*

and Glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. Is it our Interest to have the Father of Lights to illuminate, and the God of all Consolation, ~~to be incircled with the Favour of the Almighty, as with a Shield,~~ as a Sun to chear and comfort us? Are the Blessings of Grace desirable, and those of Glory yet more? Is it a Priviledge indeed, to want nothing, which Infinite Wisdom shall see good for us, either in Time, or to all Eternity? then its unquestionably our Interest to seek this Kingdom.

The other out of the New Testament, 1 Cor 3. 22. *Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the World, or Life, or Death, or Things present, or Things to come, all are yours.* Saith the Holy Ghost, speaking unto the Subjects of this Kingdom; and what can the great Soul in Man ask more, they leave no room for further Desire. The Possessions of the Grand Seignior, or the great Mogul, are but like the poor Man's Cottage, if compared with these. Angels may have more than such in Possession, but cannot have more than they who are Christ's, have in Reversion. Other Arguments might be urged to the same purpose, but shall wave them, and conclude all, with a few Considerations to stir up such, as are in the Morning of their Lives, thus to seek it. For,

First, Are not Delays exceeding sinful, and exceeding dangerous? They are exceeding sinful, as being filled up, either with a making Provision for the Flesh, to fulfill, or an actual fulfilling the Lusts thereof. Sin drinks

drinks up the whole of our Time, and either hides, or goes away with all our Talents, till employed in this Kingdom. They are also sinful, as they are an abuse of the Fathers Patience and Grace, as well as a slight put on the Love and Gospel of the Son. They are sinful, as they are usually accompanied, with grieving the Spirit, stifling Convictions, bribing Conscience, and squandering away the precious Moments of a day of Grace.

They are also exceeding dangerous. Were we several times to be born into this World, and to be trusted with the Means of Grace, or were we to live as long as *Methuselah*, and have our day of Grace, run Parallel with that of Life, the risk would not be so great; but alas! we are to live but once, and that Life is like a Vapour, which appears for a little while, and then vanisheth away. We are crushed before the Moth, that tender Insect. We are never too healthy to be sick, or too young to die. There's a to morrow hastning, which will bring forth Death and Judgment; and none knows but it may follow upon the heels of to day. They who refuse a Christ, a Pardon, a Robe of Justifying Righteousness to day, may not only want an offer of Christ to morrow, but a to morrow to have him offer'd in. Is it not just, that Death should shut those Eyes, and stop those Ears, without any further delay, which for many Years have been blind to the Glory, and deaf to the Call of Christ?

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Thirdly,

Thirdly, Is it not pity the Devil should have any, and yet greater pity he should have the best of your time? It's pity he should have any, as he is God's Enemy, envies his Blessedness, is opposite to his Holiness, undermines his Government, rebels against his Authority; doth what in him lies to eclipse his Glory, baffle his Counsels, blend his Works, frustrate his Grace, and destroy his Gospel. It's pity he should have any, as he is ours, envied our Primitive Happiness, attacked our first Parents, through Lies and Flattery, drew them into a snare, robbed them of their Innocence, their Paradise, their Immortality, and which is more, their God, his Favour, as well as Image, whereby Sin and a Curse became entail'd on all their Posterity. The blow given, was so great, that the direful effects of it are felt by us, in Soul as well as body; though at five thousand Years distance: An Enemy, whose thirst after Souls is both cruel and insatiable, hath slain his Thousands, but is as unsatisfied as if he had slain none. How oft did he endeavour to rob us of our Saviour? I am apt to think, he therefore put Cain on Murdering Abel, hoping thereby, to have destroyed the Holy Seed; and Esau, upon killing Jacob; and Pharaoh, upon destroying all the Males born to Israel. The same cruel Design was carried on by him, in stirring up Herod to murder Christ whilst an Infant; in tempting him to question his own Divinity in the Wilderness, in dissuading him from accomplishing his Mediatorial Suffering Work at Jerusalem, and to mar all by coming down from the Cross. It's his Hell to see a Sinner saved, but his

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Heaven to see us damn'd. As there is Joy in Heaven, so Grief in Hell, when one is converted. Could he but devour one of Christ's Sheep, it would be like Streams of Water to cool his Tongue.

Thirdly, Can Time or Strength be employed to better purpose? What's greater or nobler in its self, than to answer the nobler end of Creation, and the yet nobler of Redemption; to shew forth his Praise, who made us, and having undone our selves, hath been at infinite Cost to redeem us? To return Love for such Love, and glorifie him, who glorifies himself in our Salvation, is heavenly Employ. Is God the best of Benefactors, as well as Beings, and shall we not betimes resolve to be the Lords? Can Time and Talents be better employed, than in hastning our escape from a Storm, which will both last and encrease for ever, and sink our Souls into the lowest Hell. To exchange Hell for Heaven (did we know the Torments of the one, and the Glories of the other) would appear a Business of Infinite Concern.

Fourthly, Is it possible to make too early an escape out of Sodom? Suppose you had been an Inhabitant of that wicked City; had heard, and belived the Judgment threatned; Could you have slept in it another Night, or lingred one hour? A Natural State is more dangerous. Was Sodom full of Sin? So is a Natural State, in it we sin all the day, and every day. Was Sodom appointed unto Destruction? So is a Natural State, live and die in it, and you are un-

done for ever. A Natural State is a State of Guilt, wherein Sin, all Sin, in all the aggravating Circumstances thereof, is imputed to us; in it we are reckoned to owe Ten thousand Talents, but have nothing to pay. A Natural State is a State of Condemnation, wherein, by the righteous Sentence of the Law, we are bound over, to undergo all that Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguish, which Sin deserves; And is such a State to be continued? O the outcry! if earthly Flames are but ready to catch our Houses: But how much worse is it to have those of Hell ready to seize our Souls?

Fifthly, Can you be possessed of Christs unsearchable Riches too soon? The Riches of Christ are twofold; there are the Riches of his Person, and the Riches of his Purchase. The Riches of his Person are altogether Infinite: He is rich in Wisdom, and rich in Power, rich in Love, and rich in Grace, rich in Faithfulness and Truth: as rich as the Father in these, and all other Divine Excellencies and Perfections, whose Equal and Fellow, personally considered, he is; for in him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. The Riches of his Purchase, respect either the price laid down, rich Suretyship, Sufferings, rich Suretyship Obedience, or the Blessings purchased, a rich Pardon, rich Justification, a rich Peace, a rich Image, to be richly drawn on the Heart, and richly expressed in the Life of all his Followers, a rich Gospel, rich Experiences, rich Comforts, and Riches of Glory. His Riches are unsearchable, cannot be told over, much less spent to all Eternity.

Christ

Christ paid down an invaluable Sum of Merit, into the Father's Hand, to be given forth to the Subjects of this Kingdom, in the Blessings of Grace and Glory. Put in for this Kingdom; for its Subjects, though they are not, neither is it fit they should be put into God's Word, as joint Purchasers with Christ, yet they are put into his Will, as Joynt Heirs, *Rom 8. 17.* Was I able to offer, the Riches of both the *Indies* to this Assembly, Would you delay to accept such a Treasure? The Riches I am sent, and empowered to offer, are the Revenues of Christ's Blood; what they come to, so much are the Subjects of this Kingdom worth. Receive the Gospel of this Kingdom in the Love of it, and you carry Christ, and all he is worth, who is worth all God is worth, home along with you.

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